

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1261

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO, PT, ID

SUBJ: GOI CHARGE COMMENTS ON TIMOR

REF: LISBON 1229

SUMMARY: GOI CHARGE IN LISBON CLAIMS GOI HARBORS NO TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS BUT COULD, IF PROVOKED, EASILY TAKE TIMOR. GOI WANTS POLITICAL STABILITY IN AREA AND IS ON GUARD AGAINST CHINESE THREAT. GOI UNCERTAIN OVER GOP INTENTIONS IN TIMOR AND FINDS AUSTRALIAN POSITION DISAPPOINTING. CHARGE APPARENTLY NOT YET COMMUNICATING WITH GOP. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF LUNCHEDED MARCH 6 WITH INDOESIAN CHARGE IN LISBON, MUHAMMED HASSAN. HASSAN WAS FORTHRIGHT AND EAGER TO DISCUSS TIMOR. SUMMARY OF REMARKS FOLLOWS:

2. INDONESIAN EMBASSY:

WITHIN 48 HOURS OF JANUARY ANNOUNCEMENT THAT GOI-GOP RE-ESTABLISHED FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, GOP RAISED JAKARTA CONSULATE TO EMBASSY LEVEL. GOI FELT PRESSURE TO RECIPROCATE AND TOLD HASSAN TO OPEN LISBON EMBASSY QUICKLY. HASSAN ARRIVED LISBON FEB. 23 AND
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PLANS ON RETURNING JAKARTA MRCH 10 FOR TEN DAYS CONSULTATION.

3. GOI POSITON IN SE ASIA:

KEY INTEREST OF GOI IN SE ASIA IS DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL STABILITY. INDONESIA IS A "VERY POOR COUNTRY." POSITION OF GOI IS MAXIMUM EFFORT TO DEVELOP ECONOMY, AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK WITHOUT POLITICAL STABILITY IN AREA. GOI HAS NO TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS AND SHARE SOVEREGNTY OF OTHER ISLANDS WITH GOVERNMENTS SUCH AS PAPUA NEW GUINEA, MALAYSIA, AND SINGAPORE.

4. CHINA:

WHEN DEALING WITH CHINESE, INDONESIA TAKES REALISTIC POSITION. SINCE EARLY 1950'S, GOI HAS BEEN ONLY COUNTRY IN AREA TO FOLLOW ONE-CHINA POLICY. GOI STILL WILLING TO ESTABLISH FULL RELATIONS WITH PRC IF GOI COULD OBTAIN PRIOR GUARANTEE OF NON-INTERFERENCE. (CHARGE SHOWED EMBOFF STAMP IN DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT PROHIBITING TRAVEL TO ISRAEL AND TAIWAN.) "ACCORDING TO INTELLIGENCE REPORTS," OVERSEAS CHINESE FROM SINGAPORE, INDONESIA, AND MALAYSIA ARE MOVING INTO PORTUGUESE TIMOR. AS RESULT, GOI FEARS CHINESE INTERFERENCE IN INDONESIA.

5. INVASION PROSPECTS:

GOI HAS NO TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. HOWEVER, IF GOI WANTED TO DO SO, TAKEOVER COULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN 24 HOURS. WORLD OUTRAGE, IF ANY, WOULD PROBABLY LAST FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER WHICH ACTION WOULD BE FORGOTTEN.

6. GOI-GOP RELATIONS:

GOI IS GENUINELY WORRIED AS TO WHETHER GOP IS SINCERE IN STATEMENT THAT LISBON WILL "CONSULT" WITH GOI IN ACTIONS CONCERNING TIMOR. FOLLOWING MARCH 5 DIPLOMATIC LUNCHEON (REFTEL), MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO VITOR ALVES TOOK GOI CHARGE ASIDE AND ASSURED HIM GOP AWARE OF GOI CONCERN AND WILL "CONSULT" WITH GOI ON TIMOR. GOI PUZZLED BY ALLEGED DISCREPANCY BETWEEN WORDS FROM LISBON AND GOP ACTIONS IN DILI. GOI IS INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT GOP DECOLONIZATION EFFORTS IN AFRICA AND BACKGROUND OF TIMOR MILITARY GOVERNOR COL. LEMOS PIRES. (COMMENT: CHARGE KNEW NOTHING OF PIRES'S BACKGROUND).

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7. AUSTRALIA:

GOA HAS GREAT STAKE IN FUTURE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND IS NOT DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH TIMOR FUTURE. GOI UNDERSTANDS BUT IS DISAPPOINTED WITH "SHORTSIGHTED" GOA STAND.

8. COMMENT: COMPLETE IGNORANCE AS TO BACKGROUND OF PIRES AND NUMEROUS QUESTIONS ABOUT PORTUGUESE INTENTIONS REGARDING TIMOR SUGGEST THAT, AT LEAST TO DATE, HASSAN HAS NOT BEEN OVERLY

SUCCESSFUL IN ESTABLISHING DIRECT OR CREDIBLE CONTACT WITH TOP
LEVEL GOP. WE UNDERSTAND FROM AUSTRALIANS HERE THAT HASSAN HAS
NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEE WITHER FOREIGN MINISTER OR HIS
DEPUTY, DESPITE REPEATED REQUESTS.
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